

Gloucester City Council

Members' Roles

The descriptions in this Members' Roles Profile try to capture the essence of Members' roles. Activities not listed should not automatically be assumed to be outside the role. The document may be amended as often as the Council considers necessary to keep it relevant and up to date.

This document aims to describe the potential range of activities, which Members may find themselves undertaking in their various roles, it does not seek to prescribe what Members must do.

This document should provide a direct and useful reference for anyone taking on, or considering taking on, the roles described. It should also therefore assist with identifying suitable training and development opportunities.

1. **COUNCILLOR - CORE ROLE** **Council Duties**

- To represent electors and the local communities of the Ward in the City of Gloucester to which they have been elected by acting as advocates, campaigners, representatives and champions.
- To attend and contribute to meetings of the full Council and its Committees as necessary.
- To contribute to the political leadership of the Council and undertake any other role allocated in respect of either Executive, non-Executive, Overview & Scrutiny or quasi-judicial / appeal functions.
- To undertake other official duties or act as representatives of the City Council on outside bodies / external organisations to which they have been appointed and feed back, where required .
- To participate in setting a budget, forming the Council's policy and scrutiny of practices and service delivery.
- To monitor performance against targets in all areas of the Council's direct and indirect activity.
- To co-operate with other agencies to the benefit of people in the City.
- To promote and represent the City Council in the local community.
- To liaise with other levels of government, agencies or bodies with influence over the well-being of the City and local area.
- To attend Committees, Panels, Working Groups, Task and Finish Groups and other meetings as required.
- To undertake appropriate personal Development necessary to carry out their role(s) or designated responsibilities;
- To participate in any training and development initiatives that are either a constitutional or legal requirement or which have been identified as a development opportunity.

Community duties

- To promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community.
- To communicate with and inform constituents.
- To be an advocate with whom constituents can raise issues of importance or personal concern.
- To campaign for measures that will secure strong, safer communities.
- To help the community to access funding from different sources.
- To liaise with other levels of government, agencies or bodies where appropriate.
- To develop an understanding of and impact on the local community of the key City Council strategies and plans developed by the Council together with those developed by external partners.
- To develop appropriate relationships with key individuals and partners in the Ward and to seek to secure the commitment of those individuals and partners in shaping and developing a shared vision for the community.
- In undertaking their duties, to observe the Code of Conduct for Councillors and any other codes and protocols adopted by the Council.
- To promote the civic life of Gloucester and participate in civic events.

The roles described above must be carried out in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity, dignity and due respect for Members, employees, service users, partners and constituents.

Conventions and Protocols

To enable Councillors to fulfil their duties and responsibilities, Councillors:

- expect to be briefed, informed and involved in respect of any issue or initiative affecting their Ward;
- have certain rights of access to information held by the City Council. Councillors should, however, recognise the need to respect any confidentiality of information made available to them by the City Council to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities and respect the privacy of individuals, and any confidential commercial information provided to them by businesses and organisations;
- may not serve (or act as a substitute) on the Planning or Licensing and Enforcement Committee unless they have undertaken the required training.
- who serve on the Planning Committee must abide by the Code of Practice for Councillors engaged in the determination of Planning Applications¹;
- who serve on Licensing and Enforcement Committee, must abide by the Probity in Licensing and Enforcement Code of Practice¹;
- should comply with the Council's protocol on Member/Officer relations and be aware of the distinction between the roles of Members and Officers¹.

¹ Copies of the Codes of Practice and Protocol referred to here can be found in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution

2. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Key duties

- To represent the City at local, regional and national levels, acting as an ambassador and leading the development of key strategic partnerships with local communities, outside agencies and key stakeholders to deliver the Council's corporate objectives and provide high quality services to residents.
- To provide clear / strong, fair and visible political leadership for the Council, relating to all Members, citizens, staff and stakeholders.
- To lead the development of local and regional policies which fulfil the Council's corporate policy objectives, as stated in the Council Plan (or relevant successor plans).
- To lead on the Council's effective decision-making processes and supporting administration.
- To lead the budget-making processes of the Council.
- To lead the Council's public participation activities, encouraging local people to take part in the Council's decision-making processes.
- To lead on all regional affairs.
- To appoint Members to the Cabinet.
- To Chair all meetings of Cabinet and manage its business / work programme / the Forward Plan.
- To take Executive decisions in Cabinet and as an Individual Cabinet Member with delegated authority, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To lead in ensuring that the Council's strategies, plans, objectives and targets are monitored, implemented and achieved.
- To ensure that the Council is open and responsive to the community, so that accountability is seen to operate.
- To ensure that decisions are taken properly, openly and, where appropriate, publicly and that key decisions are properly programmed and subject to effective public consultation.
- To develop and maintain a good relationship with the Chief Executive of the Council and other Officers, providing a contact point between the political and Officer groups and setting an example to the whole organisation.
- To nominate Council Members from his/her political group to serve on all appropriate member bodies, including, as appropriate, other outside bodies.
- To provide effective liaison between all political groups.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor, Group Leader and Portfolio Holder Role Descriptions.

3. **DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Key duties

- To deputise for the Leader of the Council in his/her absence, undertaking those duties expected of the Leader and encompassed in the role description for that position.
- To chair Cabinet meetings in the absence of the Leader of the Council.
- To act as the Council's spokesperson on all key corporate issues, consistent with the Council's overall policy and budgetary framework, in the absence of the Leader.
- To hold and lead on any Portfolio Holder position which the Council may allocate.
- To undertake specified delegated / designated Leader duties.
- To share and support in general the full workload of the Leader.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor and Executive / Portfolio Holder Role Descriptions.

4. POLITICAL GROUP LEADER

Key duties

- To provide clear political leadership for the Political Group represented.
- When in Opposition, to provide credible checks and balances, challenges and alternatives to the ruling Political Group.
- To canvass a range of views within the Political Group in the formulation of policy.
- To integrate and represent Political Group policy at a local level.
- To co-operate with other Political Groups where appropriate, particularly in matters of a non-party political nature.
- To chair and/or attend meetings where appointed to a representative role within the Council.
- To liaise with other local and regional representatives of the party.
- To monitor the performance of the Council against its budget, policy and performance plan.
- To represent the views of his/her Group in relation to any matter on which Officers seek consultation and guidance.
- To provide effective leadership and management of and communications within his/her own Group.
- To ensure that members of his/her Group comply with local and national Codes of Conduct and protocols governing Member conduct and behaviour and, where necessary, to deal with any breaches of these codes or protocols.
- If appropriate, to 'shadow' one or more service of corporate area of the City Council's activity.
- If appropriate, to appoint members of his/her Group to 'shadow' particular service or corporate areas of the City Council's activity.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description.

5. PORTFOLIO-HOLDER / CABINET MEMBER

Executive duties

- To work at meeting the Council's corporate objectives, as set out in the Corporate Plan.
- To take Executive decisions in Cabinet and as an Individual Cabinet Member with delegated authority, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To encourage performance improvement in all services, consistent with Value for Money principles and within the policy and budgetary framework agreed by the Council. This includes responding appropriately to statutory reports on external inspections and service reviews.
- To develop a full understanding of the functions and services in the allocated Portfolio.
- To facilitate and encourage public participation in the Council's activities by engaging key stakeholders in the Council's decision-making processes.
- To oversee the publication of consultation papers on key issues and ensure that there is appropriate public consultation.
- To consider budget priorities and actions on the delivery of Council services within the overall policy and budgetary framework agreed by the Council.
- To consult with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on matters relating to the development and formulation of policy.
- To consult with local Ward Members about policy developments or service initiatives which have a specific relevance to their areas.
- To support positive relationships and practices through co-operative working with Officers and Trade Unions.
- To commission research, studies or the collection of information relating to policy issues or service delivery.

Portfolio Holder duties

- To provide pro-active political leadership and to be the principal political spokesperson for the designated function / service of the Council set out in the allocated Portfolio.
- To initiate (subject to any necessary Cabinet/ Council approvals) and/or promote policies and programmes in the allocated Portfolio within the Council and externally.
- To provide political leadership in ensuring that service strategies, plans, objectives and targets within his/her area of responsibility are monitored, implemented and achieved.
- To present and consult on the Council's policies in the allocated Portfolio with the public, directly and through appropriate media.
- To engage actively and represent the Council in appropriate local, regional and national groupings involved with the service areas set out in the allocated Portfolio.
- To make recommendations about the implementation of policies within the allocated Portfolio.

- To report to the Council on decisions made, actions taken and progress achieved within the allocated Portfolio.
- To consult with and report as required to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- To commission and consider reports from appropriate Officers as required for the efficient discharge of the Portfolio Holder's duties and responsibilities.
- To keep abreast of national best practice / new initiatives in the areas covered by the Portfolio to help ensure high local service standards and provision.
- To consider and act on performance data and reports from the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- To contribute to the corporate development of the Council's policies and objectives through active engagement of Cabinet.
- To work closely with relevant Senior Officers of the Council to support the efficient management of the Council and to uphold high standards of performance and conduct and in enabling Officers to exercise any powers delegated to them.
- To attend meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as and when required.
- At meetings of Cabinet, normally to present / speak to and to move any necessary motions in relation to his/her areas of responsibility.
- To advise Cabinet on how to respond to a scrutiny report relating to his/her area of responsibility.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description.

6. MAYOR (Civic / Ceremonial)

Key duties

- As the City's first citizen, the main role of the Mayor is to act as the non-political, Civic and Ceremonial Head of the City.
- To chair meetings of the full Council so that its business can be carried out fairly and efficiently and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community.
- To uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution.
- To determine any matter referred to him /her in relation to matters requiring an urgent decision pursuant to the Constitution.
- To maintain the historical and ceremonial traditions of the Office of Mayor.
- To promote as widely as possible the interest and reputation of the City Council and of Gloucester locally, nationally and internationally.
- To promote, liaise and link with private and voluntary sector organisations in the City.
- To participate in and help initiate activities which enhance the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the City and its residents.
- To act as patron / president to local organisations.
- To act as host to official visitors to the City.
- To attend civic events and local community activities.
- To represent the City at ceremonial events.
- To act as the City's representative on other occasions determined by Council.
- To carry out all duties in a manner appropriate to the status and tradition of the Office.

The Sheriff and Deputy Mayor will on occasions, also perform this role.

- To deputise, as necessary for the Mayor.
- To undertake specific tasks and responsibilities as requested by the Mayor.
- To work actively with the Mayor to manage the work of the Council meeting.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description.

7. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIR

Key duties

- To chair the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and manage its business in an efficient manner, ensuring effective engagement by all members and participants.
- To provide leadership and direction both for the Committee and for scrutiny arrangements within the Council.
- To promote the role of Overview and Scrutiny both within and outside the Council.
- To lead and encourage members of the Committee in the formulation of a scrutiny programme which is manageable, balanced and meets the criteria for chosen review topics.
- To organise Committee Members' input into the development of the Council's policy and budget framework and to encourage Members of the Committee to put forward proposals in respect of the development of the Council's other policies.
- To engender a culture for scrutiny in which party political considerations are put aside, focussing instead on achieving the best outcomes for the community.
- To ensure that individual scrutiny exercises are conducted in an appropriate and timely manner.
- To work with the Vice-Chair and relevant Officers to co-ordinate the activities and the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- To foster and maintain a disciplined approach by the Members involved in scrutiny having regard to high standards of behaviour and ethics.
- To monitor the Council's decision-making processes, ensuring that such decisions are consistent with Council policy.
- To scrutinise the activities of the Cabinet.
- To invite members of Cabinet, Officers and others to attend meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to answer questions.
- To own and present the reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the relevant bodies with the Council.
- To report annually to Council as part of the overview and scrutiny arrangements.
- To develop and maintain an effective working relationship and links with Cabinet and its members.
- To bring forward suggestions to ensure the future development of the Council's policies and scrutiny practices.
- To respond on any matter referred to him/her in matters requiring an urgent decision pursuant to the Constitution.
- To organise Committee Members' input into the Council's Value for Money processes and to advise the Council on its approach to Value for Money.
- To act as a focus for liaison between the Council, communities and partners in the scrutiny function.

Vice-Chairs will on occasions, also perform this role

- To deputise for the Chair of the Committee.

- To undertake specific tasks and responsibilities as requested by the Chair.
- To work actively with the Chair to manage the work of the Committee.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description.

8. **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Key duties

- To scrutinise Cabinet decisions, to assess how these contribute to effective service delivery and help to achieve the Council's Corporate Plan and whether they are in accordance with the Council's approved budgetary and policy framework.
- To contribute to the development of the Council's policy and budget framework and to put forward proposals in respect of the development of the Council's other policies.
- To review individual policies and projects to evaluate their effectiveness and success and consult with all relevant stakeholders in this process.
- To monitor how the Council is meeting its agreed corporate objectives, as set out in the Corporate Plan.
- To facilitate and encourage participation in the Council's activities by effectively engaging local residents, businesses, outside agencies and other key stakeholders in the Committee's work as appropriate.
- To check that the Council continues to improve performance in all services within the policy and budgetary framework agreed by the Council and recommend areas for improvement and change.
- To undertake reviews of the Council's services and make recommendations which positively contribute to improving service delivery.
- To put forward suggestions for areas for scrutiny and participate fully in the conduct of any scrutiny exercise.
- To conduct research, and undertake community or other consultation.
- To question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).
- To promote the role of Overview and Scrutiny both within and outside the Council.
- To contribute to suggestions for the future development of the Council's scrutiny practices.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description.

9. MEETING CHAIRS

Key duties

- To enable the smooth and orderly conduct of business within the Council's Constitution.
- To provide leadership and direction for the Committee.
- To determine priorities in light of the volume of work presented to the Committee.
- To ensure an orderly debate or deliberation of the business in hand.
- To report on the workings of the Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel or Working Group to the Cabinet or full Council, as appropriate, and to present, where appropriate, recommendations to the Council.
- To allow proper consideration of any item.
- To ensure that the Committee, Sub Committee, Panel or Working Group takes balanced decisions based on all relevant evidence, with impartiality and fairness.
- To ensure, with the Chief Executive, that Committee decisions are recorded with full justifications / reasoning.
- To develop a thorough understanding of the subject area of the Committee, including relevant legislation and policies.
- To bring, where appropriate, the views of co-opted members (if any) to the attention of the Cabinet or Council.
- To liaise with Officers in formulating Agendas and future work plans, and to attend any meetings with Officers to discuss matters relevant to the business of the Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel or Working Group.
- Where appropriate, to liaise with other interested parties in establishing co-opted membership, and topics for consideration.
- Where applicable, to liaise with other tiers of local government and to contribute to any other joint working arrangements.
- Where applicable, to lead such site visits that may assist Members arriving at a considered decision.
- To undertake specific training including updates in the law pertaining to the work of the Committee.

Vice-Chairs will on occasions, also perform this role

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER

Key duties

- To participate in Committee discussions.
- To give proper consideration to items before and during meetings.
- To offer opinions based upon an understanding of the legal requirements of the subject discussed.
- To inform the Committee of constituent opinion (if appropriate).
- To take into consideration a range of views and issues when reaching a decision.
- To conduct oneself with dignity and decorum when offering views which differ from those of other Members.
- To undertake appropriate site visits.
- To undertake specific training including updates in the law pertaining to the work of the Committee.

The above activities are in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Core Councillor Role Description